



CITY OF ST. MARYS
418 OSBORNE STREET
ST. MARYS, GEORGIA 31558

MINUTES for PUBLIC HEARING and REGULAR MEETING

St. Marys, Planning Commission
Tuesday, October 22, 2013
City Hall Council Chambers

PUBLIC HEARING

The meeting was called to order at 5:30PM.

There was a quorum of members present for the meeting. The following committee members were present: Larry Johnson, Doug Cooper, Arlene Norris, and Mike Rich. Royal Weaver was not in attendance.

Roger Weaver and Michele Wood represented the Planning Department.

The following items were heard in Public Session at a Public Hearing held Tuesday, October 22, 2013 at 5:30 PM at City Hall Council Chambers, 418 Osborne Street, St. Marys, GA 31558.

1. **MINOR SUBDIVISION:** Old Weed & Ready Plantation, LLC, 6301 Memorial Highway, Tampa, FL 33615 is requesting to subdivide 2.45 acres from 718 acres of Parcel 149-004. The property is zoned R-5.

Jeff Foster, AKM Surveying, represented Old Weed & Ready Plantation at the meeting. Mr. Foster explained the applicant was requested to subdivide an isolated parcel located at the southwest corner of the property formerly known as the Durango Paper Mill. Mr. Foster stated he knew there were some concerns from the City regarding future plan use for this property; however, no one knows at this time what it will be.

Al Chapman addressed the Planning Commission stating he has plans to purchase this property. Mr. Chapman stated he owns Southern Junction Events Center and has plans to use this property to adjoin Southern Junction for future expansion of his business. Mr. Chapman informed the Planning Commission of how well his antique stores are doing in downtown St. Marys and that work is continuing on the boat storage and building on Meeting Street with hopes to bring additional people to downtown St. Marys.

Roger Weaver addressed the Planning Commission stating his comments have nothing to do with Mr. Chapman and his plans with the property. Mr. Weaver stated that in November & December of 2011, Old Weed & Ready Plantation, LLC had submitted an application to the Planning Commission and City Council to subdivide a portion of the old mill property. The applicants assured the Planning Commission and City Council that they had no plans to further subdivide the property. Now a subdivision request has been submitted again. Usually with a subdivision, the City would know what the plans are for that property. Mr. Weaver stated he understands that Mr. Chapman is possibly looking at putting a parking lot on the property; however, parking lots are not permitted in residential zoning. Mr. Weaver stated that the City does not know what the plans are for the mill property; the trustee had already turned down subdivisions that were more economically viable and were submitted with plans. Mr. Weaver stated he had recommended to the Planning Commission, in their packets, that the subdivision be postponed indefinitely until the entire site is identified, and the proposed land requirements of that unknown buyer can verify that this parcel is not necessarily for the use and success of an-as yet-unknown proposed future development. Mr. Weaver stated his purpose on postponing the request is because we do not know what the future purchaser may want with this property; the zoning ordinance states that we should know the whole plan for the property and what its use is going to be. Mr. Weaver stated there is not enough information presented to approve the request. There were no comments or questions from the public.

2. **RE: SPECIAL USE PERMIT:** Bobbie Sant, Kingsland, GA 31548 is requesting a Special Use Permit on Kings Bay Road to operate a used car sales & towing business. The parcel is zoned C-2, Tax Parcel 121-076A.

John Heaney spoke on behalf of Bobbie Sant. Mr. Heaney explained that they had previously had a used car sales and towing business in St. Marys. They are looking to locate their business on Kings Bay Road. The front of the building would be made of stucco & brick. Their plans are to place a chain link fence behind the structure for the towed vehicles. The fence would be covered with a mesh material that is used on fences surrounding tennis courts.

Dean Privett, Privett Surveying, came forward to say there had been some concerns regarding utilities, access and drainage. Mr. Privett stated they have been working on this; however, they were waiting to make sure they receive approval for the Special Use before proceeding further.

Larry Johnson, PC Chair, stated the Planning Department had received an email from W. H. Gross expressing his concerns that the parcel will turn into a junkyard and that they are trying to keep this area as a business professional area. Mr. Heaney responded saying that they had been in business on Charlie Smith Sr. Highway and had never once had any problems with the appearance of the property nor received any complaints from Planning & Building or from the Code Enforcement officer. Mr. Heaney stated he felt that they had already proven that their properties are well maintained and handled in a professional manner. Roger Weaver stated that with the Special Use, the applicant would be allowed to have a commercial business at that location. The C-2 zoning does not specify professional businesses only. There were no comments or questions from the public.

Motion to Adjourn Public Hearing - Motion was made by Doug Cooper to adjourn the Public Hearing: Second by Mike Rich. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

REGULAR MEETING

Approval of Minutes of August 27, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting— Motion was made by Doug Cooper to approve the minutes as submitted; second by Arleen Norris. Larry Johnson & Mike Rich abstained from voting as they were not present for the August PC Meeting. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Old Business

1. **SIGN ORDINANCE** - Vote from the Planning Commission to have the Sign Ordinance changed and put in the proper format for City Council approval.

Roger Weaver explained that the Planning Commission would be voting to remove the regulation of signage within the historic district from the authority of the Planning Commission to the Historic Preservation Commission. Doug Cooper made a motion to approve the request; second by Arlene Norris. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

New Business

1. **MINOR SUBDIVISION:** Old Weed & Ready Plantation, LLC, 6301 Memorial Highway, Tampa, FL 33615 is requesting to subdivide 2.45 acres from 718 acres of Parcel 149-004. The property is zoned R-5.

Doug Cooper stated that he had heard at the City Council meeting the applicant assuring council they were not going to ask for further subdivisions of this property and continue piecemealing it out; however, they are doing so now and without submitting a plan. Mr. Cooper stated it was difficult to grant approval knowing they had stated they would not be submitting further subdivision requests. Ms. Norris asked to confirm that the City was requesting to postpone the request; Mr. Weaver confirmed stating a denial would require the applicant start the process over. Postponement would force the trustee to do something. Mr. Rich stated he agreed with the postponement, not that the owner can't subdivide property, but acknowledging the concern the City has with the overall master plan for the area. If you start taking choice parcels and isolating the rest, creating unusable and undesirable properties not consistent with the master plan, it hurts the City and property owners adjoining the mill property. Mr. Rich felt the postponement was the

most equitable thing to do under the circumstances. Mr. Johnson then asked Jeff Foster and Al Chapman whether they wanted to postpone the request or to go ahead and vote on the request. Mr. Chapman stated he wanted the Planning Commission to vote. Mr. Chapman explained to the PC that this is an isolated, less desirable property that no one would want other than Al Chapman. With the request of Mr. Chapman to vote on the request, Doug Cooper made a motion to deny the request; second by Arlene Norris. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion. Mr. Foster was informed that the applicant can appeal his request to City Council if an appeal letter is submitted within fifteen days from the date of the meeting.

2. **SPECIAL USE PERMIT:** Bobbie Sant, Kingsland, GA 31548 is requesting a Special Use Permit on Kings Bay Road to operate a used car sales & towing business. The parcel is zoned C-2, Tax Parcel 121-076A.

Mike Rich made a motion to approve the request as submitted; second by Arlene Norris. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion. The request will go to City Council for final approval.

Granting Audience to the Public: - No Comments.

Discussion:

- Roger Weaver informed the Planning Commission that he has been asked to be a guest speaker on Monday, October 29, 2013 regarding sea level rise.

Motion to Adjourn Regular Meeting – Motion was made by Arlene Norris to adjourn the meeting; Second by Doug Cooper. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM.